

Woolston Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111182
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	395391
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Morley

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Shipton
Headteacher	Nick Toyne
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Morley
Paul Latham
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Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons and part lessons, taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, two members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, subject leaders and senior staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' workbooks, internal and external data about pupils' progress, school improvement planning and documentation in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors took into account the responses in 56 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 94 completed by pupils and 20 returned by teaching and support staff.

Information about the school

Woolston is larger than the average sized primary school. Pupils are of predominantly White British heritage. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is low as is the proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is below average. In 2011, the school met the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has the Artsmark, Activemark and Healthy School status. There have been some significant changes in staffing and a new headteacher has been recently appointed.

The school has on-site private nursery provision, Playdays Pre-School and the Woolston Wasps Link Club, which is a private provider for before- and after-school activities.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement in English.
- The school's overall effectiveness is not satisfactory because pupils' achievement in English in Years 2 to 6 is inadequate, which means that their overall progress is also inadequate.
- Attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is broadly average but by the end of Year 6 attainment in reading and writing is below average and too many pupils, particularly more-able pupils and those with special educational needs, make inadequate progress in English. As a result of recent action by the school's leaders, some improvements are evident in teaching but consistently good practice, particularly in the teaching of English, is not yet embedded fully across the school. Attainment in mathematics is broadly average.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there are inconsistencies in quality between classes and across year groups particularly in English. Some good teaching was observed during the inspection. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them are strong. Pupils' learning and progress in English are inadequate because expectations of what pupils should achieve are not uniformly high enough and are not always articulated to them.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their consistently above-average attendance. However, where teaching is weaker pupils' attitudes and behaviour during lessons are not consistently good and this limits progress being made.

- The newly appointed headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has dealt successfully with some significant staffing issues and strengthened the monitoring of teaching, although inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching. Most senior leaders and managers are developing their roles effectively, but the governing body does not challenge the school's performance rigorously enough. School leaders are increasingly successful in managing performance. The impact of this is becoming evident through improvements in reading at Key Stage 1, in mathematics provision and in subject leadership. These demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently at least good in order to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' learning and progress, particularly in English, by:
 - ensuring teachers' expectations are consistently high in all classes
 - ensuring introductions to lessons are sharply focused allowing more time for pupils to complete tasks and explore learning for themselves
 - improving the use of assessment information to ensure lesson plans take full account of pupils' starting points and provide challenge, particularly for the more-able
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum
 - ensuring all pupils are aware of their learning targets in writing
 - improving the provision for reading for more-able pupils at both key stages.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership by:
 - ensuring actions, particularly the monitoring of teaching, have a consistently positive impact on pupils' learning across the school
 - ensuring the curriculum fully meets the needs of the more-able pupils
 - providing more rigorous subject leadership in English
 - ensuring the governing body holds leaders rigorously to account for planned improvements.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is inadequate. Children's starting points in the Reception Year vary, but overall are broadly at the levels expected for their age. During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and enter Year 1 with average levels of attainment. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress varies considerably, reflecting inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, particularly in English. Overall, progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. However, more-able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 is

below average. By Year 6 attainment in mathematics is average but in reading and writing it is below average, in particular the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5.

Although in lessons pupils are keen to learn, their progress, particularly in English, is sometimes slowed because they are not given an appropriate level of challenge. Pupils find tasks either too easy or too difficult. The progress of pupils with special educational needs varies but is satisfactory overall. Pupils show increasing enthusiasm for reading and many read independently at home. Interactive reading programmes, whereby the older pupils support the younger ones, are having a positive impact and are improving outcomes in reading. Pupils enjoy learning phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is average and is improving. Parents and carers have positive views about the school and say that achievement is good. Inspection evidence does not support this view because pupils, particularly the more-able, make inadequate progress in English.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory overall and improving, although there are inconsistencies in its quality. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory and is characterised by realistic challenge and many opportunities for children to learn both independently and also collaboratively with their peers. Teaching across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and improving and there are examples of good practice. However, the inconsistencies in teaching lead to a lack of engagement and limit progress for some of the pupils. Pupils' workbooks and their views reflect this inconsistency.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the best teaching is characterised by teachers' high expectations for work and behaviour, a brisk pace, stimulating resources, challenging activities, interesting content and good use of humour to engage pupils. In these lessons pupils work hard, are keen to contribute their views and discuss work with their friends. During the inspection, examples of good teaching that enabled pupils of all abilities to make good progress included a Year 1/2 lesson which focused on the Olympic Games and brought the past into the present. High quality resources and artefacts were explored by pupils and they were confident to contribute and develop their own ideas independently and in collaboration with their friends. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the pace of learning accelerated when pupils were given the opportunity to work independently. They were very motivated and enjoyed challenging each other to improve their recall of multiplication facts. In these lessons, teaching made a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Where lessons are less effective, expectations of what different groups of learners should achieve are not explained to them and so not understood by the pupils. In these lessons pupils are given the same task. This does not take account of individual learning needs and particularly limits the progress of the more-able pupils. Teachers talk for too long, which leaves little time for pupils to write, or rush their input, missing opportunities to consolidate learning and assess pupils' understanding. In particular, pace and challenge are not always appropriate to maximise

achievement. Pupils are given little opportunity to explore learning for themselves or to work independently. Pupils have targets for numeracy and literacy but in writing, while some know exactly what is needed to reach the next level of attainment, others do not and are unsure of their targets.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is differentiated, but it is not always tightly matched to their specific needs to ensure the best possible progress. While most parents and carers are happy with the quality of teaching their children receive, inspection evidence shows that teaching is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils are happy, confident and secure in school and this shows in their attendance, which is consistently above the national average. They are well-mannered and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They know how to stay safe and healthy and have a good understanding of the risks to which they may be exposed, both within and outside school. Pupils form good relationships with each other, are polite and show high levels of consideration and courtesy on corridors and moving in and out of the hall. The school 'buddies' play a leading role in modelling and promoting fair play and good behaviour. Pupils appreciate the support provided by all adults but they equally appreciate the opportunity and responsibility to solve their own problems. In the playground, play can be boisterous but good-natured and pupils socialise well together. Pupils say that most of the time behaviour is good and that there is little bullying or name-calling. Furthermore, pupils say that the school teaches them about what forms bullying can take and the dangers of each of them, for example, cyber-bullying. The majority of parents and carers feel that behaviour is good and that the school deals effectively with any rare cases of bullying.

Inspectors observed a few occasions when pupils' concentration slipped. Where this was the case it was associated with a weaker pace of learning when teachers talked for too long or when the work was not particularly interesting or challenging. On such occasions, pupils' growing lack of interest and enthusiasm was clearly evident, although they were compliant and did not misbehave. Parents and carers express confidence in the school's systems for keeping their children safe and secure. They are very appreciative of the family values and as one parent suggests, it is very much a 'parent as partner approach'. Inspection evidence indicates that behaviour in lessons and around school is typically satisfactory.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is resolutely focused on improvement. There is accurate and honest self-evaluation and an overriding concern, shared by the majority of staff, to raise standards of attainment and improve achievement. The introduction of a whole-school tracking system soon after the headteacher's appointment ensured that staff and the governing body have a clearer picture of how well pupils are achieving. This has been key in providing greater rigour in assessing pupils' attainment and progress. However, this information is not yet used consistently by teachers, for example, to guide the planning of the curriculum for writing so that activities fully meet the learning needs of all pupils, particularly the more-able. School leaders

systematically monitor pupils' progress within lessons, at an individual, group and class level. Monitoring by senior leaders is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of provision and consistency of outcomes in classes.

The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders continue to be developed, reflecting significant strengths in some areas but scope for improvement in others. Leadership of mathematics is ensuring provision is appropriately matched to pupils' starting points for learning. The leadership and management of English, whilst showing some improvement, have not yet had a similar impact on improving teaching. There has been significant recent professional development for staff, targeted at whole-school improvement. For example, a focus on training in the teaching of phonics has increased the confidence of Key Stage 1 staff, enabling them to support reading development better. The deputy headteacher plays a key role in raising achievement for pupils and is a good role model for teaching.

The curriculum is in a stage of transition with key skills being linked to a topic based approach. There is a good variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which are popular and well attended by pupils, such as visits to Styall Mill, Tatton Park and the Manchester Museum of Science and Industry. In addition residential experiences are provided, with children in the Reception class having the opportunity to stay at the Beeston Education Centre. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those children initiate for themselves.

Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development effectively and mutual respect abounds. However, pupils have little opportunity within the curriculum or first-hand opportunities to connect with, learn about and secure understanding of cultures which are different to their own. The curriculum is no better than satisfactory overall because it does not consistently ensure that the experience for individual pupils is closely matched to their current needs, motivations and interests.

The governing body, while fully supportive of the school's direction to achieve its vision, does not challenge school leaders with sufficient rigour. The school has effective strategies to tackle discrimination. However, there are inequalities in the rates of progress made by different groups of pupils and hence the impact of the promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate. Safeguarding and child-protection arrangements are secure and fully meet current requirements. Engagement and communication with parents and carers are positive. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the education evenings to help them support their children in their learning. An overwhelming proportion of parents and carers who completed a questionnaire appreciate the dedication and contribution of the school and its staff.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woolston Community Primary School, Warrington, WA1 4PA

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspectors and for being so polite and kind when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you enjoying learning and the many interesting things you do.

Your teachers are working hard to help you in your learning. It was pleasing to see the improvement that you have made and that you are enjoying your topic work and the many visits you go on. Your behaviour on the playground is good and you play well together. We really liked the way in which the older children cared for and helped look after the younger ones. Also, we liked the work of the 'buddies' and the way you sort out your own problems. You know how to stay safe and many of you told us how much your teachers care about you. We really want you all to work hard in class and make sure you help yourself and your friends to do well in their work.

The inspectors judged that some important things in your school need to get better and so we have given the school a 'notice to improve'. This means that inspectors will visit your school again soon to see how well things are improving. Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you. We have asked them to ensure that you get more support to improve your progress in English. We have also asked that your teachers set you work that is more challenging and that they have the highest expectations of you. Finally, we have also asked them to ensure that all lessons are good and that you have activities that help each one of you improve your work.

Once again, thank you for making us so welcome. Keep up the really good attendance and keep on being kind to each other; help your teachers and work hard to improve your school.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Morley
Lead Inspector

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